



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Sacramento District  
1325 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

# Public Notice

Number: 200675511

Date: January 5, 2007

Comments Due: February 2, 2007

**SUBJECT:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct the Ranchmen's Ditch Flood Control project, which would result in impacts to approximately 6700 linear-feet of waters of the United States, including fill of .76 acres of wetlands, in or adjacent to Independent Ranchmen's Ditch and Leach Creek. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/regulatory.html>.

**AUTHORITY:** This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States.

**APPLICANT:** City of Grand Junction David Donohue  
250 North 5th Street  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81501  
970-244-1554

**LOCATION:** The project site is located within the City of Grand Junction near Section 31, Township 1n, Range 1e, UTM 12 713387E 4332223N, Mesa County, Colorado (figures 1a-1c), and can be seen on the Grand Junction (CO) USGS Topographic Quadrangle.

**PROJECT PURPOSE:** The project purpose is to alleviate potential flooding of roads, homes, businesses, and other infrastructure within a portion of the City of Grand Junction in the event of a 100-year storm event. According to information provided by the applicant, existing flood control infrastructure within the project area is unable to adequately prevent or reduce flooding associated with a 100-year storm event.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The project, as proposed, consists of multiple design elements originating near the southwest of Walker Field, following an alignment along a portion of Independent Ranchmen's Ditch and a portion of Leach Creek. Specifically, the project consists of the following components:

- 1) an existing detention basin on Walker Field Airport property will be enlarged and modified into a 13.7 acre twin-basin configuration. The construction of this detention basin will not impact any wetlands or other jurisdictional waters of the U.S. According to information submitted by the applicant, the twin retention basins will have a 54 acre-feet capacity, and will reduce the discharge of a 100-year storm event from 500 cubic feet per second (CFS) to 24 CFS.

- 2) Along the west side of 1st Street and Patterson Road, a cured-in-place pipe will be installed inside approximately 500 linear-feet of an existing 84-inch-diameter corrugated metal pipe (CMP). According to information submitted by the applicant, the current CMP is failing and the cured-in-place pipe will increase storm water flows at this location from 650 CFS to over 700 CFS.
- 3) The installation of approximately 2000 linear-feet of 60-inch-diameter and 72-inch-diameter reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) parallel to an existing 72-inch-diameter RCP on the south side of Patterson Road, east of 25<sup>1/2</sup> Road.
- 4) The installation of two (2) 90-inch-diameter RCPs into the open portion of Ranchmen's ditch, on the south side of Patterson Road between 24<sup>1/2</sup> Road and 25<sup>1/2</sup> Road. This portion of the project will result in the fill of approximately .74 acres of fringe wetlands and 2.4 acres of other waters of the U.S.
- 5) Removing and reinstalling approximately 730-linear-feet of existing 54-inch-diameter RCP in the southern Mesa Mall parking lot. Additionally, a triple-barreled 78-inch-diameter culvert will be installed in the parking lot.
- 6) The installation of a concrete lining in Leach Creek underneath the I-70 business loop bridge. The construction of the concrete lining will involve the placement of 365 cubic yards (CYDs) of concrete and 1000 CYDs of 2-inch-diameter washed rock. According to information submitted by the applicant, the concrete lining will increase storm water capacity from 800 CFS to 1400 CFS. This work will result in the fill of approximately 0.026 acres of fringe wetland and 0.32 acres of other waters of the U.S.
- 7) Channel improvements along 2,000 linear-feet of Leach Creek south of the I-70 business loop bridge. These improvements include reducing current bank slopes from 1:1 to 2:1 (horizontal/vertical), eradicating Tamarisk, and repairing 4 areas of the bank which have collapsed below the OHW.
- 8) Two (2) temporary check dams will be installed both upstream and downstream of the I-70 business loop bridge during construction. These temporary check dams will utilize approximately 21 cubic-yards of fill each.
- 9) One 1/2 inch-thick steel plate will be temporarily installed across the existing 60-inch-diameter culvert at the intersection of Patterson Road and 25 Road through the duration of construction. Water flow will be directed into an existing overflow structure and routed into Buthorn Drain.

The attached drawings provide additional project details.

**AREA DESCRIPTION:** The majority of the project area is described as being within an established urban setting. Independent Ranchmen's ditch has been modified among many portions of its historical alignment via piping and channelization. The portions of Independent Ranchmen's Ditch within the work area contain fringe wetlands, limited to an overall width of approximately 4 feet. Leach Creek has undergone similar historical modifications in some

locations, and portions within the project area also contain fringe wetlands. These fringe wetlands vary from 1 to 4 feet in width. The detention basin located on the southern portion of Walker Field is comprised completely of uplands, bordered by Government Canal and office buildings to the west, and I-70 to the south. The proposed mitigation area is comprised of an existing pond containing wetland vegetation comprised primarily of Tamarisk and Salt Grass. The mitigation area is located approximately 1200 linear-feet south of the intersection of the I-70 Business Loop and Leach Creek.

**ALTERNATIVES:** The applicant has provided five alternatives:

Alternative 1 is the No Action Alternative. In this alternative, the applicant would not undertake any action to control urban flooding. The applicant states that 383 developed properties within the Horizon Drive basin would be subject to flooding during a 100-year storm event in this alternative. These properties include homes, an elementary school, a mobile home park, commercial structures and retail developments. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has indicated that substantial revisions to current floodplain mapping in the affected areas will be necessary in the event that the applicant does not take any action.

Alternative 2, known as the "Large Detention Facility" was the original flood mitigation plan recommended by the 1998 Grand Valley Storm Water Management Master Plan. This alternative would develop two large regional detention facilities near the intersection of Patterson Road and 26 Road and convey the reduced flows via a smaller pipe system along 25<sup>1/2</sup> Road to the Colorado River. The applicant maintains that the cost of acquiring additional real estate and the increased impact to the environment makes this alternative less desirable than the preferred alternative.

Alternative 3, known as the "Big Pipe System" would convey the total amount of water associated with a 100-year storm event from the intersection of 26 Road and Patterson Road south along a route east of 25<sup>1/2</sup> Road to the Colorado River. The applicant maintains that difficulties in securing easements along these alignments and associated increased costs make this alternative less desirable than the preferred alternative. This alternative would eliminate .28 acres of existing jurisdictional fringe wetland.

Alternative 4, involves increasing the capacity of Independent Ranchmen's Ditch and pipe system along the south side of Patterson Road. This alternative would require the acquisition of a limited amount of new right-of-way (ROW). This alternative would be accomplished primarily by excavating a steep side-slope within Ranchmens' Ditch, resulting in an open trapezoidal cross-section. The steep banks would require the placement of shotcrete for stabilization, making the restoration of wetlands within Ranchmen's Ditch extremely difficult. This alternative was deemed less desirable by the applicant to the preferred alternative due to perceived safety issues created by increasing the depth and slope of an open water body in an urban area.

Alternative 5 is the applicants preferred alternative, and is the proposed project as described above under "Project Description". As stated by the applicant, this alternative is preferred because the piping of Ranchmen's ditch, in addition to alleviating potential flooding, would eliminate a potential transportation safety hazard, accomodate a recreational trail (the applicant has not submitted any plans for a recreation trail at this time), and would allow for future expansion of Patterson Road to accomodate 7 lanes of vehicular traffic. This alternative would

eliminate .76 acres of existing jurisdictional fringe wetland and impact 6700 linear-feet of other waters of the United States.

Additional information concerning project alternatives may be available from the applicant or their agent. Other alternatives may develop during the review process for this permit application. All reasonable project alternatives, in particular those which may be less damaging to the aquatic environment, will be considered.

**MITIGATION:** The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation.

The applicant has proposed to create and enhance existing wetlands along Leach Creek and within an existing pond located approximately 1200 linear-feet south of the intersection of the the I-70 business loop and Leach Creek. The proposed mitigation ratio (created/eliminated) is 3.96:1 The applicant anticipates increased abundance of wetland vegetation via natural recruitment and supplemental planting within the slope reduction area proposed for the banks of lower Leach Creek south of the I-70 business loop bridge. Tamarisk control along the banks will be accomplished via a cut/stump treatment of Garlon 4, and long term monitoring maintenance measures are anticipated.

The bank slope of the the existing pond will be reduced from 2:1 to 5:1 (horizontal/vertical). The applicant proposes stripping a 6-inch-deep layer of topsoil from existing wetland areas to be stockpiled and used in the creation of additional wetland area. The applicant anticipates increased abundance of wetland vegetation via natural recruitment and supplemental plantings. The mitigation site will be protected in perpetuity through the execution of a legal instrument.

**OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS:** Water quality certification or a waiver, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division, is required for this project. The applicant has stated that they have applied for certification.

**HISTORIC PROPERTIES:** In written correspondence dated January 6, 2006, the Colorado Historical Society found the project, as presented at that time, resulted in a finding of *no adverse effect*. The Corps will initiate consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer under Section 106 of the National Preservation Act, as appropriate.

**ENDANGERED SPECIES:** In written correspondence dated January 20, 2006, the United States Fish and Wildlife Office (USFWS) found the project, as presented at that time resulted in a finding of *may affect, not likely to adversely effect*. The Corps will initiate consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as appropriate.

The above determinations are based on information provided by the applicant and our preliminary review.

**EVALUATION FACTORS:** The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue

from the described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. The activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

**SUBMITTING COMMENTS:** Written comments, referencing Public Notice 200675511, must be submitted to the office listed below on or before February 2, 2007:

Mr. Stephen Moore, Project Manager  
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District  
Colorado/Gunnison Basin Regulatory Office  
400 Rood Avenue, Room 142  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81501-2563  
Email: [stephen.a.moore@usace.army.mil](mailto:stephen.a.moore@usace.army.mil)

The Corps is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic environment and the secondary and cumulative effects. Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. If you have questions or need additional information please contact the applicant or the Corps' project manager Mr. Stephen Moore, 970-243-1199, [stephen.a.moore@usace.army.mil](mailto:stephen.a.moore@usace.army.mil).

Attachments: 16 drawings